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For exchange of information
on nutrition programs
and activities

NUTRITION

PROGRAM NEWS

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NUTRITION ACTIVITIES IN POVERTY PROGRAMS

HELEN P. FOWLER, M.S., NUTRITIONIST, CONSUMER AND FOOD ECONOMICS RESEARCH DIVISION

"Poverty" is an important part of many agency programs—governmental, quasi-official, and voluntary. Home economists, nutritionists and workers in allied professions have been active in this area for many years. Recent legislation has made it possible to extend existing programs and to initiate new ones. Agencies represented on the Interagency Committee on Nutrition Education are contributing through their own programs to this community action.

Many nutrition workers were motivated to a greater and more coordinated effort by participating in the American Home Economics Association's 1965 workshop—Working with Low-Income Families. The 1965 workshop was reported in the May-June, 1965, issue of NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWS. Because of the many requests for more information, this issue is devoted to other activities that have come to our attention.

Information has been supplied primarily through State Nutrition Committees. State programs have been implemented by Federal agencies, including the Office of Economic Opportunity and the U. S. Department of Agriculture; by State, County, and City Health and Welfare Departments; by Extension Services; by Departments of Education, and by Departments of Social Work.

NUTRITION ACTIVITIES

Nutrition Councils and Committees

Some State Nutrition Councils and Committees serve in advisory capacities to programs for the disadvantaged; others participate directly in the programs.

Classes for Low-Income Homemakers.—The Nutrition Committee of the Health Council, Jefferson County, Alabama, planned an extensive nutrition education program for low-income families after the inception of the Food Stamp Program in 1963. A workshop, held in September 1963, dealt with problems encountered in working with low-income groups.

The Committee prepared and distributed leaflets each month on nutrition facts, low-cost menu suggestions, and

We are indebted to Mrs. Irene H. Wolgamot, Assistant to the Director, Consumer and Food Economics Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, for reviewing this manuscript and for making helpful suggestions.

Mrs. Wolgamot, Coordinator on Resources for Low-Income Families for the American Home Economics Association, issues a newsletter for home economists interested in low-income families. Copies may be obtained from the American Home Economics Association, 1600 20th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009.

food-buying tips. After this project had continued for 6 months, the Committee members felt that low-income families needed more help.

The Birmingham-Jefferson County area has a population of 159,303 families, with 41,041—or 26 percent—receiving an income under \$3,000 per year. There are 6,800 families living in 16 housing projects.

When the administrative heads of the local housing authority showed interest in educational programs covering all areas of homemaking and family life for the homemakers in their housing projects, a series of four classes in food management was planned.

The subcommittee responsible for planning and conducting the classes included a hospital dietitian, a home economist with a utility company, a public health nutritionist, the director of the local dairy council, the project supervisor of the Food Stamp Program, and the director of the Health Council.

Subcommittee members took great care in selecting an approach for teaching food management to families living in housing projects. Under a leader-training approach, residents of the projects would be directly involved. The management personnel chose 40 women who appeared to be "leader types." Members of the subcommittee then

trained these women on aspects of food management. After every class, each leader in turn taught 10 other persons. In this manner, 400 families were reached.

The subcommittee planned subject matter and chose visuals. Federally donated foods used for demonstrations were supplemented by food from local food dealers.

The series on food management included family nutrition, good food buying practices, and food storage.

Session 1 covered a simple discussion of food and its role in the body, as well as menu planning geared to the Daily Food Guide. Low-cost main dishes were demonstrated. A tasting session followed and recipe sheets were distributed in packets of 11—one for each leader and 10 for her contacts.

Sessions 2 and 3 gave information on good buying practices and proper storage procedures. The fourth session offered each leader a chance to share her learning and teaching experiences with the others. Certificates were given to participants who attended three or four sessions.

A representative was present at each session to discuss the Food Stamp Program with those interested.

The food management sessions were taught in 10 of the 16 housing projects from August 1964 until June 1965. A total of 457 persons attended the series with 298 receiving certificates. The leaders contacted 2,940 persons, or 26 percent of the families in the housing projects.

As a result of the series, Nutrition Committee members saw the need for a nutritionist to work exclusively with low-income families. Two members of the Committee wrote a grant proposal for a nutritionist to be included in the health component of the local poverty program.

Nutrition for Needy Families. — The Connecticut Nutrition Council has promoted action programs for low-income families. In January 1965 the Connecticut Health League and the Connecticut Nutrition Council sponsored a special meeting on nutrition for needy families.

At this meeting a panel of community workers presented the topic, "What Needs We See." Three discussion groups, each with a leader and a recorder, were organized after the panel. The purpose was to present dynamic approaches for meeting these needs.

Each discussion group was limited to 20 minutes. One group discussed problems and needs; one group explored briefly what had already been done; a third group used the creative technique of brainstorming to arrive at new ways of solving problems and meeting needs.

A bibliography of pertinent materials, prepared by the Council, was given to each participant.

In March 1965, Connecticut had five representatives at the American Home Economics Association's workshop on low-income families. Dr. Francena Nolan Miller, then Dean of Home Economics at the University of Connecticut,

served as chairman of the workshop. The representatives brought back new ideas for activities through:

1. The Connecticut Home Economics Association.
2. The University of Connecticut.
3. State Agricultural Extension Service.
4. Connecticut State Department of Education.
5. The Connecticut Nutrition Council.

In the fall of 1965, the Connecticut Nutrition Council invited the administrator in the State Office of Economic Opportunity to give the members an overview of the program in the State. Discussion followed regarding Community Action Committees and the usefulness of nutritionists and other home economists on these committees.

A State meeting entitled "Professionals Working with Low-Income Families" was held Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 1966, at the University of Connecticut. The objectives of this meeting:

1. To share knowledge of current programs in the State for low-income families.
2. To explore the professional resources, their interrelationships, and their contribution to the solution of low-income problems.
3. To gain a greater awareness of the life styles and problems of the low-income families.

First, reports were given by those working with leading Community Action Programs. These were followed by talks describing previous experiences in the State. A case study was considered in group discussions. This provided an opportunity to review cooperative community action by agencies working together "to help the poor to help themselves."

State Home Economics Associations

State Home Economics Associations have sponsored numerous State and regional workshops, conferences, and projects. At present 64 workshops have been scheduled in 44 States. Conferences and projects have also been held that have assisted those who work with the disadvantaged.

Use of Donated Foods. — In 1964 the nurses of the Summit County, Ohio, Health Department conducted a project to learn ways to help families make best use of donated foods. The nurses realized that the poverty program increased their contacts with disadvantaged families; they recognized a need for more information on the use of these foods.

A committee planned the project with the help of the district nutrition consultant. She suggested that the nurses should get firsthand experience with the donated foods.

The nutritionist had adapted federally developed recipes using donated foods to the facilities usually found in the homes of low-income families in Ohio. These recipes were submitted to the nurses. Each nurse was asked to

indicate the recipes she would like to prepare at home for demonstration and sampling.

After choices of recipes were made, 44 "commodity" dishes were prepared and tasted at a "Tasting Party" luncheon. One nurse provided a fresh vegetable salad. She emphasized that the greater use of the donated food recipes would stretch the food dollar and allow for larger purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Health Commissioner, nurses, and the district nutritionist attended the luncheon. Guests were divided into teams to evaluate a given number of dishes. As a result, some dishes were accepted as originally made; others were modified to increase acceptability in Ohio.

The 44 recipes and directions for the use of dried eggs and nonfat dry milk were incorporated into a recipe booklet, "Thrifty Ways with Food." This booklet was distributed to the nurses. Ten months later, they reported that the booklet had been successfully used by low-income families, school lunch personnel, public health nurses in other health jurisdictions, and the State Department of Welfare.

The nurses suggested that the booklet be revised to include fruit and vegetable salads as suitable accompaniments to the "commodity" dishes. Information on storage of donated foods would be helpful. Also, they suggested that recipes should be rechecked.

The staff of the Summit County Department of Health received numerous requests for "Thrifty Ways with Food" from rehabilitation centers, welfare boards, and public health and hospital nursing services. The nurses in Summit County believe that this project has met a long-felt need.

The county director of nurses suggested that it would be more meaningful for staff nurses in other localities to participate in a similar project than to use this booklet.

Extension Service

The Cooperative Extension Service in Kansas does a great deal of work with low-income families. An issue of "Extri," an Extension Service publication, described two success stories in this field.

Working with Low-Income Families. — A public health nurse asked Sedgwick County Extension Service workers to offer classes for groups of low-income families. The nurse, who had worked with many of these families over a period of years, felt that even financial assistance would not solve all their problems. They needed basic knowledge and skills—including food selection for adequate nutrition, child care, management of time and cost of credit.

A plan was adapted from one previously used for an Extension Service home demonstration unit. At meetings in homes, groups of low-income homemakers decided what instructions they needed most. Extension workers started classes for these women in July, 1965.

The group asked for further information on good nutrition, the use of donated foods, food purchasing, and the proper use of storage space. Homemakers also wanted information on other aspects of family living.

These classes are at present a joint endeavor by a home economics extension agent and a public health nurse. Other instructors may be brought in later.

Breakfast Lesson for Foster Mothers. — A food lesson on "Better Breakfasts" was part of a regular training program of the Kansas Extension Service. A welfare worker, who had taken this training, suggested that a Jefferson County Extension agent set up a similar program for foster mothers. A group of 15 mothers in Jefferson County was selected for this program. (This group was meeting regularly for other educational programs.) Counting their own children and their foster children, these mothers fed 52 youngsters daily.

The lessons included a discussion of characteristics of a good breakfast, easy-to-prepare breakfasts, and breakfasts made up of unusual foods. Emphasis was placed on tempting the child who does not like to eat breakfast.

The mothers were interested in learning good sources of Vitamin C, other than orange juice. A popular activity was the sampling of "different" breakfasts.

The State Extension Service home economist assisted the Jefferson County home economist in developing a similar program with families in the County who participate in the Food Stamp Program.

As a result, the Kansas Interagency Nutrition Committee recommended that Statewide goals should be established and then that local committees should be organized with agency representatives to carry out the programs with low-income families.

Boards of Education

Boards of Education are also functioning in programs with low-income families.

The Family Life Education Center. — The staff of Family Life Education Center of the Toledo Board of Education contributed to the Ohio Low-Income Conference by preparing a resume of the work being done in Toledo to help the city's disadvantaged families.

For example, the Food Stamp Education Committee—representing many community agencies—initiated, planned, and evaluated ways to help recipients use stamps wisely.

Television programs, radio "spot" announcements, and group activities in settlement houses, housing projects, and block clubs helped educate food stamp recipients. Some recipients took part in a Statewide survey designed to find ways to make better use of food stamps.

During the first summer of the Food Stamp Program, volunteer home economists worked at the Center to answer questions and give information about diet, food preparation,

and shopping. Later, a home economist was added as a fulltime staff member of the Welfare Department.

The Food Stamp Flier Committee is a subcommittee of the Food Stamp Education Committee. It prepares a monthly flier that is distributed to all recipients at the Center when stamps are purchased. This features menus, recipes, and suggestions for selecting good buys from the four basic food groups. The fliers are used as teaching tools by a variety of people working with low-income families.

The Preschool Pilot Program, another project of the Family Life Education Center, was begun in the fall of 1964 in cooperation with the County Child Welfare Board. Its purpose was to determine what could be done at the preschool level to prepare deprived children for a successful school experience. In this program, the children go to school twice a week and their mothers meet once.

Sessions for mothers during the first year presented ways to achieve adequate nutrition, proper preparation of food, and consumer education. Sessions were taught by the home economist on the Center staff. In 1965, a volunteer with a home economics background taught the mothers.

The goal of the Homemaking Education Project was to improve the homemaker's skills and develop "feelings of adequacy as a person, parent, homemaker, and member of society." Eight laywomen—who had been carefully selected for their ability to work with people—were trained as guides by the home economist of the Family Life Education Center staff in 1964. In a January 1965 pilot project, these laywomen were hired as guides by the Welfare Department. Under supervision of the home economist, the guides began to teach homemakers meal planning, food purchasing and preparation, and housekeeping techniques in their own homes. From January to August, 1965, the guides continued to work with homemakers.

In April 1966, three similar units were implemented through Economic Opportunity funds.

Connecticut State Department of Education.—Significant work has been done for disadvantaged families through the Connecticut Board of Education. Its Home Economics Service provides leadership for both secondary school and adult homemaking classes at low-income levels.

Federal funds are used to reimburse towns for hiring special adult homemaking coordinators to initiate classes for families living in public housing. Curriculum and other resource materials are available for teaching adults and youth. Examples are "Home and Family Courses for Adult Education" and "Connecticut's Concepts are Showing."

Conferences are held to acquaint home economics teachers with methods effective with low-income families.

RESOURCES FOR CONTINUING PROGRAMS

Useful materials have been prepared for continuing activities with the poverty group. Proceedings, reference kits, reports of programs and news clippings are being made available to home economists. The report of proceedings of the AHEA Workshop, "Working with Low-Income Families," is available from the AHEA, 1600 20th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009, at \$1.50 per copy.

A list of additional resources follows:

Papers from the Kansas Workshop on Low-Income Families. Kansas State University, Department of Family Economics, Manhattan, 66502. \$1.00.

Proceedings from the Nebraska Workshop—"Working with Low-Income Families." University of Nebraska, School of Home Economics, Lincoln, 68504. \$1.00.

Understanding the Disadvantaged. University of Missouri, I-98 Agricultural Building, Columbia, 65202. \$1.00.

Training Home Economics Program Assistants To Work with Low-Income Families. Program Aid 681, U. S. Department of Agriculture. November 1965. Federal Extension Service. 55 cents. Available only from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

This publication is designed for professional workers who train and supervise subprofessionals.

Handbook for Home Economics Program Assistants. Program Aid 680, U. S. Department of Agriculture. November 1965. Federal Extension Service. 25 cents. Available only from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

This handbook for subprofessionals is a complete reprint of Section 4, PA 681.

Spring Comes to Vintroux is a 16-minute color movie of Extension's work with disadvantaged families in the mountains of West Virginia. It depicts first steps in a 5-year pilot project involving Vintroux and two additional communities in helping rebuild a community and the lives of its people.

The film may be purchased from the Pittsburgh Motion Picture Laboratories, 116 Seventh Street, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15215, for \$65.00. Copies also are available for preview or loan (depending on priorities) through the Division of Information, Federal Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.